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ABSTRACT

This practicum was designed to bring together first and third generations in a caring, supportive, mentoring classroom atmosphere. The study was conducted in a co-educational K-5 public elementary school with 90 percent white enrollment. The subjects were from three fourth-grade classrooms, each with 28 heterogeneous students. Volunteer, retired citizens were recruited to guide, encourage, and socialize with fourth grade students during the school day. Data analysis showed that children responded favorably to intergenerational mentoring in the classroom. Student responses on pre- and post-practicum questionnaires affirmed their sense of increased pride and accomplishment. Students and adults responding to the pre- and post-practicum questionnaires showed an increased mutual appreciation and understanding. The survey instruments are appended. Contains 24 references. (EH)

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ED 389 636

Promoting Positive Socialization in Fourth Grade Students Through Intergenerational Mentoring

by

Howard S. Hausmann

Cluster 44

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A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1994

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Terry C. Van Zoren

Principal
Title

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July 27, 1994
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Howard S. Hausmann under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

8-30-94
Date of Final Approval of Report

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D.

Acknowledgements and Dedication

This writer wishes, with much appreciation and affection, to acknowledge those outstanding personalities who, along this four year peregrination, will be remembered, and mostly for the characteristic ascribed.

Dr. Anne Berens, common sense; Dr. Paul Borthwick, encouragement; Dr. Victoria Dimidjian, dauntlessness; Dr. Richard Fairley, humor; Dr. Abraham Fischler, intellect; Dr. Irvin Howard, friendliness; Dr. Georgianna Lowen, peace; Dr. May Ellen Sapp, refinement; Dr. Gerald Sroufe, deportment; and Dr. Kenneth (Ken) Tewel, integrity.

This study could not have been written without the students, teachers, and mentors.

To Dion, Francis, and Harrison for friendship.

To those who, like the writer, were or are alone in their childhood.

Most credit goes to the writer's wife, Penny, who said permitting her to type thousands of pages for Nova Scutheastern University, was the nicest thing the writer has done for her in 35 years of marriage.

For Keryl Ann Hausmann.

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ABSTRACT

Promoting Positive Socialization in Fourth Grade Students Through Intergenerational Mentoring. Hausmann, Howard S., Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Socialization/Intergenerational/Early Childhood/Elementary/Secondary/School Age Child Care/ Mentoring/Retired Citizens

The writer believes increasing numbers of children, because of a variety of economic and social reasons, need more opportunities to socialize meaningfully with adults. Children need praise, recognition, and encouragement to enable them to see the worthwhileness of their daily labor and to foster the desire for continued achievement.

This practicum was designed to bring together first and third generations in a caring, supportive, mentoring, classroom atmosphere. Volunteer, retired citizens were recruited to guide, encourage, and socialize with fourth grade students during the school day.

Analysis of the data revealed that children responded favorably to intergenerational mentoring in the classroom. Student responses to pre and post practicum questionnaires affirmed their sense of increased pride and accomplishment. Student and adult, pre and post practicum questionnaires, showed an increased, mutual, appreciation and understanding.

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July 28, 1994 — Howard S. Hausmann

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The school in which this project was conducted was a co-educational public elementary school housing 600 students in grades one through five. The school, in its 27th year, served an established and stable area of the community. The students were from middle to upper-middle class homes. Approximately 90% of the students were white. Ten percent of the students represented a broad range of ethnic backgrounds. The students, annually, scored in the 90s on standardized tests. Grades levels one through four were self-contained. Grade five was partly departmentalized. This practicum project took place in three fourth grade classrooms, each with 28 heterogeneous students.

The professional staff consisted of a principal, a

physical education teacher, a computer teacher, a librarian, a speech clinician, and two English as Second Language (ESL) teachers. There was a Reading Specialist, four special education teachers, a teacher of Talented and Gifted (TAG) students, a nurse, and twenty classroom teachers. The non-professional staff consisted of two secretaries, 23 instructional aides, five kitchen workers, and four custodians.

The school district has been involved in a substantial reorganization and construction program to meet educational needs. An active citizen's advisory committee for long-range planning was working with administration and the Board of Education to ensure a sound educational future for township students.

At the time, the district consisted of seven elementary schools, two middle schools, and one two-building high school campus. The student enrollment was 9,300 and increasing.

The public school in which this practicum project took place was located in one of the ten fastest growing areas in the north eastern part of the United States. Continued growth was assured.

The formerly rural community is 22.32 square miles with a current population of 41,940. The total true real estate value was $1,856,561,891. The school district budget for 1993-1994 was $68.7 million. The school

district had grown by 48% over the preceding ten years. Eighty-five percent of graduating seniors pursued further education. Nearly 1,200 students attended Adult School programs each semester.

A wide variety of services and recreational opportunities make this community a good place to live, to work, and to learn. A modern highway system affords residents fast, efficient travel into large urban work and market places as well as shore or mountain resorts.

The Writer's Role

The writer has, for 35 years, been involved in several positions within the school district, including the principalships of seven schools over a period of 23 years. To broaden his background in early childhood education, and to pursue a doctorate in education, he resigned the principalship to teach grade four.

Chapter II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The writer believes increasing numbers of elementary school students, because of a variety of economic and social reasons, need more opportunities to socialize meaningfully with adults.

The writer identifies three parts to every student's day, namely, schooling, private time before and after school, and sleep. With more dual parents entering the work force many children are either left alone or attend day care centers before and/or after school. In effect, their day is lengthened, sometimes by hours, where they are essentially in the company of age-mates or alone.

In the writer's school building, a commercial before and after school day-care center is provided. The students who attend the center are in the school building, each day, longer than the teachers or the principal. After their lengthened "school day" the children return home where they are reunited with their parents for dinner. Later, many children go off for

several hours of unsupervised television viewing. Age-mates and television then, for many children, become the major conveyer of the child's culture. The "culture" portrayed by contemporary television programming is yet another story. Children need to live in an expressive-comunicative environment in which they may speak often with caring adults, asking and getting answers to their questions, listening to adults, and having adults listen to them.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of the problem in the local setting is supported by teacher observation, parent-teacher conferences, student and teacher questionnaire, and by the increased number of commercial child care centers.

Teacher observation and parent-teacher conferences confirm increasing numbers of dual parents in or entering the work place. More parents are unable to attend day time parent-teacher conferences due to working hours or long distances between the school and the work place. Since the school district does not offer evening conference hours, many parents do not have the opportunity to meet with the teacher in the classroom. Phone conferences, either at work or

later in the evening at home, must suffice.

A student questionnaire (see Appendix A) revealed that more than 50% of the fourth grade students polled had no parent at home full time or before or after school (see Table 1). Nearly 100% of those students reported that they neither attended a day care center or had a sitter, indicating they were left unattended or in the care of a sibling at home without adult supervision. The writer contends this is the time of day when children need care, love, reassurance, or just someone to be there and to share with them.

In a survey (see Appendix B) of 20 fourth grade teachers, each teacher reported they had one or more students with social or adjustment difficulties in class (see Table 2). Every teacher indicated they could identify students who would benefit from one on one attention. Nineteen of the 20 teachers had students who had difficulty completing homework assignments. Eighteen of the 20 teachers had students with personal, social, emotional, or family problems, attention deficit, or who had difficulty completing class work. Fifteen of the teachers could identify students who regularly exhibit frustration in the classroom.

A survey of student-time spent on non-school activities (see Appendix C) revealed 44 hours per week

Table 1

Before and After School Adult Supervision

Adult Supervision	Yes	No
Parent at home full time	7	19
Adult at home before and after school	11	15
Go to: Day care	2	24
Go to: Sitter	1	25
Home - no adult	12	14

Table 2

Classrooms with Identifiable At-risk Fourth Grade Students

	Yes	No
1. Do not complete homework	19	1
2. Have difficulty completing classwork	18	2
3. Exhibit frustration frequently	15	5
4. Exhibit attention deficit	18	2
5. Have personal, social, emotional, or family problems	18	2
6. Could benefit one on one	20	0

at play and TV and seven hours with their parents (see Table 3).

In the state of New Jersey the number of licensed child care centers has increased every year since 1975 (see Table 4).

Causative Analysis

The writer concedes there may be innumerable reasons why contemporary children and youth spend less quality time interacting with adults but cites four causes. First, more parents are in or entering the work force. Not only are single parents working outside the home but, increasing numbers of dual parents are in the work place too.

Second, with so many parents working, more and more children are left alone before and/or after school, placed in child care centers, or left with a sitter. Third, while at home many children spend several hours watching unsupervised television programming. Fourth, often because of geographic reasons, members of the extended family are not located near enough for frequent family visits. Grandparents, once under the same roof, are frequently located in other states or in senior citizen housing often at a distance from the child's home. Because children and youth spend more time alone,

Table 3

Average Time Spent on Non-School Activities

by Students in the Study

Activity	Total Weekly Hours
TV viewing	22 hours
Playing	22 hours
Computer	3 hours
Reading	1½ hours
Interacting with Adults	7 hours

Table 4

Licensed Child Care Centers in New Jersey*

Date	Licensed Centers	Licensing Capacities
January 1993	2,261	136,966
January 1992	2,158	130,404
January 1991	2,084	124,020
January 1990	2,004	119,238
January 1989	1,948	111,036
January 1988	1,882	107,274
January 1987	1,825	104,025
January 1986	1,794	102,258
January 1985	1,750	99,750
January 1980	1,400	79,800
January 1975	800	45,600

*State of New Jersey, Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services, Aug. 8, 1993.

with age-mates, or watching television, the writer believes there is less time for the loving, caring, nurturing interaction with adults. Children need time for intelligent thought and discourse, to ask questions, to get answers, and to be listened to, and to have opportunities to learn from their parents and other interesting adults.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature supports the writer's thesis that children are spending more time in the company of age-mates and viewing television and less time with nurturing adults. As many as 16 years ago, Bronfenbrenner (1977) found that 55% of America's teenagers came home to an empty house.

Ten years ago, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1983) and Thornton and Freedman (1983) reported that single parent families and working mothers have increased substantially over the past 20 years. Cherlin and Furstenberg predicted that even more teenagers will be considered "latchkey" children in the future.

Koblinsky and Todd (1989) acknowledged the concern over recent years about the welfare of so called "latchkey" children as young as 5 and through the teen years who regularly are alone or in the care of another

child when not in school. Not only has the number of teenagers left alone increased, but currently growing numbers of elementary school children are being left alone or are placed in before and/or after school child-care centers. Moreover, preschool children are being added to the ranks of children placed outside the home daily by working parents.

The future course is now being set. Hofferth and Phillips (1987) projected that by 1995 there will be just under 15 million preschool children with mothers in the labor force. This represents two-thirds of pre-school children. Bergstrom (1990) estimated that 80% of children's waking hours - 195 full days each year - are spent outside of school, much of the time away from their parents. Seliason and Fink (1989) estimated that elementary school children spend about 1,032 hours a year in school. Parents employed full-time spend about 2,025 hours a year at work or getting to and from work. That leaves about 1,100 hours a year when the children are not in school nor with their parents.

With the tidal wave of children being placed by their parents into the custody-for-hire business the whole question of quality, safety, and welfare must be raised. No doubt there are many more unlicensed and unregulated child care operators than those being

regulated. Cost is always a consideration for parents. The writer believes there is always the bargain seeker, and the bargain provider, with the unknowing, trusting child in the middle.

Cataldo (1984) posed the question of who is supposed to be served by the rise in child care services, the children or the parents. Is child care to be a baby-sitting service for the convenience of parents or a carefully designed program which provides each child with the personal needs for proper growth and development? In a 68 page policy statement issued by the Committee for Economic Development (1993) the report concluded, child care has centered mostly on the convenience of today's adults and not upon the developmental needs of chldren.

Perhaps the most profound study in recent years, and perhaps for years to come, is the National Study of Before and After School Programs. The project was conducted by the R M C Research Corporation, the School-Age Child Care Project at Wellesley College, and Mathematica Policy Research Inc., under contract to the U. S. Education Department. The 350 page study looked at nearly 50,000 before- and/or after-school programs involving 1.7 million children, 83 - 90% of which were K - 3rd grade students. Only 17% of after school enrollments were 4th grade and above, perhaps

indicating children aged nine and above may be left on their own after school. The study estimated that approximately 1,714,000 children in kindergarten through eighth grade were enrolled on a regular basis in formal and/or after-school programs in the United States in 1991. Of these children 71% were enrolled in sessions both before and after school.

Among other things that children left on their own may engage in is unsupervised television viewing. In a compilation of four decades' worth of research on American's television watching habits, the American Psychological Association (APA) (1993) found that the average child who watches three hours of television a day witnesses about 8,000 murders and 100,000 other violent acts by the time he or she finishes elementary school. One is left pondering the values which are being transmitted to children.

Traditionally the socialization of children has been the responsibility of the parents with support form grandparents, teachers, and other members of the extended family who provided experiences and models which molded a child's development. Maldonado (1992) posited that over the past 40 years television has served a similar function. He believed television has been a stronger socializing agent for our children than adult role models. He admonished parents to pay

more attention and be more concerned about children's television viewing habits. Maldonado reported children under age 11 average from 20 to 36 hours a week or three to five hours daily of television viewing.

Professor Nachbar of Bowling Green State University believes we tend to know television personalities better than we know people in real life (Kane, 1992). No doubt this is due to the fact that many children have their own television set in their bedrooms where they retreat, by themselves, for hours of television viewing each day away from the influence of family role models.

In the mid 1980's Gerbner (1985) called American television a national disgrace. Gerbner posited, "For the first time in history, children are born into a symbolic world that does not originate with parents, church, or school, and requires no literacy" (p. 823). Gerbner called for a new environmental movement in which parents, health professionals, and educators present an environment of stories about families, friendships, and cooperation.

With so much "free-time" Cliff and McCrea (1993) believed that when children spend so much time in separation and disconnectiveness it can lead to a lack of interest in learning, less motivation to be a participating, contributing, productive citizen, and may contribute to involvement in self-destructive

activities.

Kelly (1991) chided, "If kids are spending 20+ hours a week watching television, they are missing out on something else, like doing homework, reading a good book, talking to their parents, playing sports, or enjoying nature" (p. 6).

Chapter III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

Many fourth grade students need opportunities to interact and socialize with adults in meaningful ways. All children need praise, recognition, and encouragement to enable them to see the worthwhileness of their daily labor and to foster the desire for continued achievement.

Expected Outcomes

1. The students will receive positive adult-assisted instruction in the classroom.

2. The students will achieve a greater sense of personal pride and accomplishment in their class-

work as a result of interaction with adults.

3. The students will achieve a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, oral history as a result of interacting with adults.

4. The students will have a better understanding of, and a deeper appreciation for, adults.

5. The adults will have a better understanding of contemporary children and their schooling.

Measurement of Outcomes

1. Fifty out of 84 fourth grade students will report, by anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix H), that they received positive adult-assisted instruction in the classroom.

2. Sixty-three out of 84 students will report, by anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix H), a sense of personal pride and accomplishment as a result of interacting with adults.

3. Each student will prepare an above average (minimum grade of 85) written report and oral

presentation (see Appendix E) in which they will compare/contrast their early childhood and schooling with those of adults. Each student will better understand and appreciate oral history as evidenced by written and oral reports.

4. Each student will report a better understanding of, and appreciation for, adults (see Appendix H).

5. Each adult will report, by anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix G), a better understanding of, and appreciation for, elementary children and their schooling, when compared to an anonymous questionnaire submitted prior to the practicum experience (see Appendix F).

Chapter IV

Solution Strategy

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The writer believes increasing numbers of elementary school students, because of a variety of social and economic reasons, need more opportunities to socialize meaningfully with adults.

There is much evidence in the literature that in recent decades increased numbers of single and dual parents are entering the work force. As a result, many pre-school and school age children need to be provided with a quality environment while separated from their parent/s. Many school age children spend much time alone or are placed in before and/or after school child care centers where they spend extra hours with age-mates, essentially away from adults. Moreover, when finally reunited with their parents, they may go off to spend more time in isolation from their parent/s watching hours of unsupervised television. Quality socializing time with their parents or other

significant adults may, therefore, be limited to minutes each day. The writer believes young formative children require more adult mentoring and socialization.

Child care experts report that school age children spend between 70 to 80% of their awake hours outside of school and that does not include holidays or summers. Self-care appears to be well established by age 7 or 8 and is the most widely used arrangement for school-age children after age 11 or 12 (Devine & Hawkins, 1992).

The writer believes the school can provide a time and place for children to benefit from some quality interaction and socialization with adults. Research supports the writer's thesis.

Edwards and Jones-Young (1992) called upon the schools for greater inclusion of adults in children's lives by drawing on community resources. These authors quoted an old African saying, "The whole village educates the child" (p. 80). Stevens and Price (1992) challenged educators to forge new family/school/community partnerships to meet children's needs. Epstein (1991) called for educators to remove the barriers and use families as resources for promoting children's learning. Epstein felt there is no defensible excuse for educators not taking the initiative to form partnerships with families.

Chapman (1991) felt that bonds between schools, families, and community groups have not only been few in number but of questionable value when they did occur. Solomon (1991) believed that family/school partnerships are essential if America is to realize the ambitious Education Goals of 2000.

Nardine and Morris (1991) challenged, "If we believe parents can make an invaluable, sustained contribution to their children's education, then the educational leaders of our states need to give parent involvement a much higher priority" (p. 366). And further, Davies (1991) called for a new definition of the term parent. Davies felt family is a more encompassing term because for many children grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters may provide care as well as parents. Schools, therefore, have the opportunity to bring parents, grandparents, and other adult family members into the school to assist in the learning process.

Before school authorities invite parents or other "out-siders" into the schools there is one other possible solution. In recent years many schools have employed teacher aides. Meade (1991) reported about the history of teacher aides in America's schools. Grants were provided in the 1950's for experimenting with the use of teacher aides. The notion of classroom

aides was opposed by teacher unions fearing nonprofessional aides would damage children. Today, it is common for paid teacher aides to be members of teacher organizations.

Currently, however, the ranks of classroom aides are diminishing because of cuts in school funding. At the same time, the number of working parents has increased. Many of the remaining mothers are at home with pre-school children which preclude them from volunteering as classroom aides. What we have said, then, is that bringing adults into the classroom might be a good idea if we can find them.

A third, and perhaps more viable notion was advanced by Schreter (1991) reporting on the growing trend to join older citizens and students in the schools. Schreter declared retired citizens are likely to spend more time volunteering in the schools than most parents, business people or college students.

A powerful suggestion came from Maxwell (1991), a past president of the American Association of Retired Persons (A.A.R.P.), when he proclaimed the AARP has many members who would be happy to volunteer in the school systems to assist teachers if asked. Freedman (1990) also suggested older adults are an intriguing potential source of developmental relationships for young people. Freedman wrote, "Elders are the fastest

growing segment of the population, may be relatively inexpensive to employ, and are in need of opportunities for socially productive activity" (p. 8).

To summarize, the writer believes children need more time to interact and socialize with caring adults. The literature suggests parent volunteers could be brought into schools. Administrators felt paid non-instructional aides would be a more viable solution. However, hard economic times have seen such non-instructional personnel cut from the budget. Since increased numbers of dual parents have entered the workplace and many other mothers have pre-school children it may not be reasonable to rely on parent volunteers. The solution, then, might be to seek retired persons as classroom volunteers.

O'Brien (1990) raised the question, "Where have all the grandparents gone?" (p. 40). She called grandparents, ". . . those generational giants who have provided guidance, direction, advice, and nurturing to parents, children, and grandchildren over the ages" (p. 40). O'Brien asks if the grandparenting job has been, "downsized? reformatted?, eliminated?" (p. 40).

Traditional family life has changed drastically. Geographic distance, changes in lifestyle, employment, and many other factors have reshaped familial roles. The children of the 90's are separated from their

grandparents. It would appear that society's expectation of the grandparenting role has been reduced and its importance devalued. The shame is that children have much to learn from their elders. At the same time the lives of elders can be greatly enriched from contact with youth. Elders are a vital link to the past. Intergenerational programs, which join the generations, would appear to be an idea whose time has come.

Friedman (1988) challenged educators to instill sensitivity and humanity toward others in our technologically sophisticated but socially immature students. She cited as an example that children are growing up today with little or no contact or understanding of the elderly. Friedman described a program in Massachusetts of structured interactions between 4th graders and senior citizens which lasted for five months. The program started as pen pals and culminated in a luncheon with a musical performance. At the end of the intergenerational program one child exclaimed, "Big people need little people."

Newman (1989) believed the time is ripe and the need is now to reconnect our society which has drifted apart. Newman felt that many of society's problems stem from too many individuals feeling disconnected, not important or valued, and who don't feel they are

part of a cohesive unit. Many people, of all ages, need support and guidance in making the important decisions in life.

Larkin (1982) called to mind a corollary benefit to intergenerational programs which benefit both the young and old. Retired citizens vote on school budget and bond issues. When seniors are actively involved in the school, they are more likely to vote for programs and people they know to be of value.

The idea of intergenerational programming in the schools is not a phenomenon of the 90's.

> "We must bridge the gap of young and old by encouraging alternate forms of social organization to supplement the family structure from which young and old are often withdrawn."
>
> White House Conference on Aging, 1971

Description for Solution Selected

The writer is convinced that fourth grade students can be provided opportunities to socialize, meaningfully, with caring adults in the classroom. By providing intergenerational socialization both young and old will work and play together fostering mutual

respect and understanding. With adults providing praise and encouragement, "on site," students may be expected to take renewed interest and personal pride in their schooling.

Students are expected to better understand oral history as they listen to adult mentors relate their early years of schooling. Students will take notes and prepare written and oral reports comparing/contrasting their schooling with that of the adult mentors.

Finally it is expected that retired citizens, by virtue of their weekly participation in the classrooms, will acquire a better understanding and appreciation for contemporary schooling. The writer believes retired citizens should be invited, and afforded the opportunity, to actively participate in the schools which they are required to support financially. Programs similar to this report might provide the necessary link between the financially troubled school systems and the electorate. Voters, particularly retired citizens, are not likely to financially support programs in which they have no vested interest or first-hand knowledge.

Report of Action Taken

The writer obtained the necessary permission from his supervisors to implement an eight month intergenerational project. The writer enlisted the volunteer cooperation and participation of two fourth grade teachers in addition to himself.

In preparation for the calendar of events included in the practicum, a dinner meeting was attended by the three classroom teachers. Following dinner the eight month calendar of events was reviewed. The teachers were encouraged to follow the outline as closely as possible but were reminded that teacher discretion should always supercede the plan. Children come first. It was agreed that subsequent meetings would be called when any one of the three teachers felt the need. Since the teachers live within a half mile, short notice meetings would be no problem.

In early September the writer met individually with each of the special subject teachers. The practicum was reviewed for the librarian, art, music, physical education, and computer teachers. Each was asked to participate. The teachers enthusiastically pledged their support and cooperation.

Volunteers were sought to serve as classroom mentors in three fourth grade clases. The writer

abandoned the idea of addressing retired citizens at their community center in favor of inviting them to the school setting. Eighty-five phone calls or letters of invitation were extended.

Twelve men and women expressed interest and were invited to a get acquainted meeting. The writer and two volunteer cooperating classroom teachers, hosted an in school meeting with the interested citizens. An informal, after school meeting was held in a classroom with refreshments provided. After greeting and introducing all parties the writer presented his practicum proposal. Following his proposal each teacher spoke briefly about their students and classroom setting. A question and answer session was followed by a friendly open discussion which quickly ran into overtime. All present firmly indicated a desire to participate in the program.

Within a few days of the meeting the writer initiated the first of a series of newsletters which were mailed to each volunteer. The first newsletter reviewed what was said at the meeting and invited each participant to visit, at their convenience, the classroom of their choice within the next week.

As a fourth grade teacher the writer sends home a monthly newsletter to inform parents of what is happening in the classroom. In the September newsletter

parents were made aware of the aims and objectives of the practicum soon to begin.

Prior to adult visitation in the classrooms it was discovered that two of the volunteers had grandchildren in participating classrooms. It was necessary to inform each grandparent of the principal's policy of not permitting relatives of children to actively participate in the child's classroom. The writer apologized for the procedure and encouraged each grandparent to remain in the program but serve in a different classroom. Within days a third adult had to drop out due to what became an extended family emergency. Once again, within days, a fourth adult dropped out citing no available free time during school hours. By this time, of the original twelve adults, we were left with only eight. We continued to send newsletters and invitations to the four but none returned. The eight adults completed the program.

The initial classroom visitations were completed in each of the three fourth grade classrooms. Following the classroom visitations, and after each adult felt comfortable, each was assigned permanently to a teacher and classroom. Three adults were assigned to each of two classrooms and two adults were assigned to the third classroom. Board of education approval for each adult was obtained (for insurance purposes).

Adults were given an open invitation to visit their classroom at any time so that their visits would span the broad curriculum spectrum. Intergenerational interaction was begun in late October. At first both the students and mentors (formerly addressed as adults) felt ill-at-ease. However, as generally happens in caring and helpful circumstances, a mutual comfort level slowly began to take over.

Calendar Plan

The first month both students and mentors completed pre-practicum questionnaires. Students greeted their mentors in the classroom and escorted the visitors on a tour of the school building and grounds. The tours were successful and did much to reassure both the students and mentors in a friendly, informal way. An open discussion centered on what we have to be thankful for this Thansgiving.

Each student prepared a paper, with guidance from mentors and teachers, describing what they had to be thankful for. The paper was to be shared with their families on Thanksgiving Day.

Using newspaper ads from the food sections, mentors

and students prepared a Thanksgiving Day dinner. Since this assignment was done in mathematics classes, the students had to decide how many guests they must prepare for, they had to keep a runing cost of each food item, and the quantity required of each food. These activities were competitive and exciting as students and mentors worked together. Mentors were surprised to see how skillful fourth grade students were with calculators. This activity, because of the excitment generated, was a great ice breaker.

A general discussion was held in which mentors shared memories of their childhood Thanksgiving Days, introducing students to oral history.

*Students recorded their experiences in student logs following each session.

The theme for the second month was the holiday season.

An open discussion was held in which students and mentors discussed memories of their past holidays and what their holidays meant to them. Holiday caroling was featured with the music teacher providing direction and accompaniment. The final sessions were devoted to classroom parties which included holiday activities such as coloring, cut and paste, games, singing and

lots of refreshments. One class had healthy snacks for refreshments because their mentor has diabetes. This was at the students' request.

*Students recorded their experiences in student logs following each session.

The theme for the third month was Winter Magic. Both students and mentors planned and prepared an 18' X 4' bulletin board titled, Winter Magic. Each classroom expressed their own ideas. One classroom placed a large black magician's top hat in the center with rabbits, ducks, doves, stars, etc., bursting from the hat. The rest of the bulletin board was comprised of drawings of snow-covered scenes and winter poems.

Following the theme, Winter Magic, the art teacher led the classes and mentors into drawing or painting winter scenes. Following the lessons, the art work of both the students and mentors was hung in the school hallways.

Students under the guidance of the mentors, read and discussed a 4 stanza poem titled, "The Gingerbread House." The remainder of the class period was spent building gingerbread houses using candy and cookies. A fun activity which consumed most of the building supplies before completion.

In science classes students and mentors charted storm fronts using three consecutive weather maps from newspapers. Data were recorded and discussed regarding storm intensity.

*Students recorded their experiences in student logs following each experience.

The theme for the fourth month was music. The music teacher presented music lessons in which students sang songs of their choice both to and with the mentors. Each of these fun filled classes ran into overtime.

In the second session, the mentors sang or played recordings of songs of "their time" both to and with the students. Music from the big band era including, "Your Hit Parade" was enjoyed by the students.

Students brought to class their favorite music on tapes, disks, etc. Students explained to their mentors what the music was about and why they like it. It can be said that music has changed drastically over the last fifty years.

Each student, who takes instrumental music lessons, brought to class their musical instrument. Students explained why they selected the instrument and demonstrated how the instrument was played. Students also explained how they read music and talked about

the importance of practicing.

One class assisted a first grade class to produce a musical play. The fourth graders and their mentors made the scenery for the play. They placed the backdrop down in the hallway and attached cut out flowers. They colored in the sky and clouds. Then they used boxes to design houses for the "Three Little Pigs." Everyone was down on their knees in the hall, designing, drawing, cutting, and pasting. The principal commented about the wonderful work being done. The first graders gave the play and thanked everyone for helping.

*Students recorded their experiences in the student logs after each session.

The theme of the fifth month was computer education. the computer teacher presented a lesson to and with the students according to her regular schedule. The mentors observed.

In the second session the computer teacher presented a lesson to and with the mentors. The students took great joy in knowing far more than their adult mentors. It is not often when 9 and 10 year olds can take over and lead the adults, and they played it for all it was worth. It became necessary to caution some students to be patient when teaching others

something new. The mentors all took it well and appeared to enjoy the experience.

The students worked with the mentors as they made posters and banners for the mentors to take home. The mentors marveled at how well the students could work at the computer when set free to do their own thing.

One class selected students to work with the mentors one on one. The mentors had to operate the computer and be instructed by the student. A male mentor was assisted as he made a Happy Birthday card for his wife, who was mentoring across the hall. Both the student and mentor had great fun producing the card which was ready when the mentoring period ended. The gentleman took much pride presenting it to his wife when she came to his classroom. She, of course, did not believe that he had made it on the computer until the entire class affirmed that he had. A student assisted another mentor when she designed a banner and card for her granddaughter who was graduating from high school. She said she would take them to Virginia for the graduation so everyone could see how computer literate she had become.

*Students recorded their experiences in the student

logs following each session.

The theme for the sixth month was health and physical education. The physical education teacher presented a lesson involving many skills in the gymnasium. Following warm-up exercises, students lined up to dribble a basketball around a long row of traffic cones before "shooting several baskets." There was a twenty minute volley ball game. The class ended with slow jogging around the perimenter of the basketball court. The mentors observed the lesson.

The second lesson saw the mentors very much in charge. Students were surprised to learn that most of the mentors actually met, and regularly workout, at an aerobics class. Each mentor took turns leading the students through a series of aerobic exercises. To nearly everyone's surprise it was not the mentors who gave out before the end of the class, but in point of fact, several of the boys and girls could not keep up. There were lessons learned by all parties in this session.

Each year the school has a kite flying contest. Students and mentors brought all kinds, colors, and sizes of kites to school. For one hour everyone ran, tugged, or untangled kites. Mentors were kept busy

either trying to launch children's kites or untangling multiple kite strings. For many students, patience was the lesson learned from their mentors.

Each year the school sponsors an all school Field Day in which students compete with each other at grade levels. There were 12 skill centers in the competition such as, water balloon toss, sack races, egg catching, and over-under ball passing. Mentors enjoyed their roles as score keepers and cheer leaders. Field Day ended with an all school ice cream social sponsored by the Home and School Council.

*Students recorded their experiences in the student logs following each session.

The theme for the seventh month was reading. Each May the fourth grade classes hold a "Colonial Day" in which boys, girls, teachers, and parents dress up as colonials or Indians. In a large outdoor courtyard students move among 15 booths or activities depicting early American life. In a large teepee, groups of children gathered as the librarian and mentors read and told stories of colonial and Indian life.

Students presented book talks in their classes about a book which they had read. Book talks are similar to book reports except that book talks involve

the listeners in a discussion about the books.

One mentor had a particular interest in reading. She gently assisted three underachieving students as they read orally. Responding to her non-threatening approach, the students began to read more than was asked of them. She then helped with their assigned workbook pages. With much patience, she helped them work through the directions and their answers. On subsequent visits her help was frequently requested by these otherwise reluctant readers.

Project READ took place this month. Every student in the school was given a calendar and was asked to read at home for at least 15 minutes. Results were to be logged on a calendar and signed by the parents. Students read daily in school for about 20 minutes. The mentors joined in this activity by discussing what they had read with the children in school. One mentor read aloud the book The Red Balloon, discussed the story with the students, then presented the video version on TV. The mentor stressed the age of the story (1956) in an effort to share an "older" story which is contemporary even today.

*Students recorded their experiences in the student logs following each session.

The theme for the eighth month was science. One class was studying animals in Science class. They were asked to care for fish, snails, and worms. Activities included feeding, charting growth, observing their habitat, and counting any young animals that were born. A mentor came in to help with the worms. Worms had to be placed in an appropriate habitat for the 3 week period. One week later, they had to be retrieved and laid out to be measured in centimeters.

The second week, they had to be brought out and tested for their reaction to light, moisture, and to be measured. The third week, they were again measured but were released outside in prepared soil.

The mentor was very impressed with the care given to these animals and the fact that even students who were squimish handled the worms carefully and with interest.

The only animals to reproduce were the snails. These were measured and counted. Food for the fish and snails was measured and charted. One mentor was surprised that data could be gathered so carefully and reliably by such young students.

Another class had a guest specialist who visited to help the class prepare for a Tech Meet, an event where any children in the district may participate

in solving a technological problem. The problem was to design an air powered car. The students were given all the specifications and the materials. The cars were raced and charted for distance only. When the mentor came in the following day, the five groups of students wanted to share their car design and distance with him. Each group took their car out into the hall and "ran" the car. The mentor had the children explain why they had selected that particular design, and what was good or bad about the car. Students measured the distance in inches. The guest had measured in feet. When all the groups were finished, they again charted the distance traveled by each car. They converted this measurement to feet and compared with the previous day's distance. An unexpected math lesson was taught.

Another project by the science groups was to lift an object from the floor to the desk top without using direct hand movement. The students were given the specifications and materials.

The mentor was present for the entire lesson and assisted the teacher with her five groups as they worked on the problem. He was very impressed with the discussion between students as they tried to devise a workable plan. They also showed a great deal of creativity in their solutions.

The final session ended, as the first session had begun. The students and mentors were encouraged to spend the final hour together, talking and walking through the building and grounds. It was a time for getting touch with their feelings and remembering their experiences together.

*Students recorded their experiences in the student logs following each session.

There were innumerable additional activities in which the students and their mentors engaged, mostly of a social nature, that were not recorded. It must be said, however, that after the initial get acquainted period passed, the generations bonded and it seemed as though together, all things were possible.

Both students and mentors completed post-practicum questionnaires. A few of the mentors requested the opportunity to return to their classes to provide ice cream or pizza parties for the children. Those occassions were interesting for the careful observer. The writer watched, in different classrooms, as the mentors "took over" the parties. The mentors selected volunteer children to first wash their hands, then

assist with passing out napkins, plates, food, etc. Each mentor moved about the classrooms, socializing quietly with each student. Finally, mentors selected children for cleanup activities. By the end of the practicum these once nervous, timid, mentors had become confident, take-charge classroom leaders.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

RESULTS

The writer believes increasing numbers of elementary school students, because of a variety of social and economnic reasons, need more opportunities to socialize meaningfully with adults. It became apparent to the writer, over the past few years, that young students were spending more time alone or in before and/or after school child-care centers. Moreover, the writer believes these students were acquiring many of their social values from either age-mates, with whom they were spending most of their waking hours, or from extensive daily television viewing.

The writer, lending credence to the old African saying, "The whole village educates the child," posited the school might be a proper venue for students and adults to socialize meaningfully. Groups of students were querried about the prospect of adult assisted

education. Following favorable responses from students, interested retired citizens were invited to mentor students in an approved classroom practicum.

It was the purpose of the writer, by actively bringing together first and third generations in the classrooms, to achieve five outcomes.

Outcome one predicted 50 out of 84 fourth grade students would report by anonymous questionnaire, that they received positive adult assisted instruction in the classroom. Unexpected events occurred which saw the projected population decrease form 84 to 69. However, by the end of the practicum 66 of the 69 students reported they had received positive adult assisted instruction (see Table 5). The increased positive response suggests the successful attainment of outcome one.

Outcome two assumed 63 out of 84 students would report, by annonymous questionnaire, a sense of personal pride and accomplishment as a result of interacting with adults. With the adjusted population 61 students out of 69 reported a sense of pride and accomplishment (see Table 5) as a result of interacting with adults. A higher positive student response suggests the successful attainment of outcome two.

Outcome three posited each student would receive an above average grade on written and oral reports

in which they would compare/contrast their early childhood and schooling with those of the adults. The result might indicate a better understanding and appreciation of oral history. The expectation of a 100% positive response was perhaps too altruistic on the part of the writer. The reports were graded by the classroom teachers and it was found that 58 out of 69 of the students received a grade of 85 (above average) on their written and oral reports.

The fourth expected outcome was that each student would report, by post-practicum questionnaire, a better understanding and appreciation for adults as a result of working with their mentors. Once again, the writer was overzealous in expecting a 100% positive response (see Table 5). Sixty-nine students answered four hundred eighty-three questions with a 84% positive response.

The fifth expected outcome was that each adult would report by post-practium questionnaire, a better understanding of, and appreciation for, elementary children and their schooling, when compared to an anonymous pre-practicum questionnaire (see Table 6).

Table 6 revealed negative attitudes were replaced by positive attitudes following this 8 month practicum. The pre questionnaire found 6 adults harboring negative

Table 5

Student Post-practicum Questionnaire

	Yes	No
Enjoy working with adults	61	8
Believe adults helped with school work	66	3
Adults are interesting	57	12
Like to spend more time with adults	59	10
Older adults understand children	59	10
Working with adults helped self-esteem	61	8
	Adults	TV
Prefer time with adults or TV	42	26
	Positive	Negative
Total questionnaire	405	78

Table 6

Pre and Post Practicum Questionnaire for Adults

1. Can you name anything exciting that is happening in today's elementary schools?

Pre questionnaire	
7 yes	1 no
Post questionnaire	
8 yes	0 no

2. Do you have any negative feelings about today's elementary schools?

Pre questionnaire	
6 yes	2 no
Post questionnaire	
0 yes	8 no

3. Do you believe our elementary schools are successfully meeting the needs of today's elementary students?

Pre questionnaire	
3 yes	5 no
Post questionnaire	
8 yes	0 no

4. Do you believe you can make a positive difference for our students in the classroom?

Pre questionnaire	
7 yes	1 no

4. Do you believe you were able to make a positive difference while working in our school?

Post questionnaire	
8 yes	0 no

5. Have you been invited to attend any school funtions since your children left school?

Pre questionnaire	
4 yes	4 no
Post questionnaire	
8 yes	0 no

feelings about today's elementary schools. The post questionnaire found there were no negative feelings regarding elementary schools. In point of fact, all 8 adults felt that the elementary schools were successfully meeting the needs of today's students. Moreover, each adult, after working in the schools indicated they had received invitations to participate in school functions. The fifth expected outcome was achieved.

Discussion

This one year study has confirmed the writer's thesis. Many children need and will respond positively to older adults, when provided opportunities to socialize, meaningfully. In this study, adults aged 55 and above, volunteered at least one hour each week, to mentor in fourth grade classrooms.

Sixty-five out of 69 fourth grade students reported, by questionnaire that they had received assistance from adult mentors in their classroom. Sixty-one out of 69 students enjoyed working with adults. Significantly, the same number of students said they felt better about themselves and their classwork as a result of working with adults. Fifty-

nine students felt older adults like children, and interestingly, the same number of students wanted to spend more time with adults. Fifty-seven children thought adults were fun, exciting people to be with.

It should be noted, however, that there were from 4 to 12 negative responses to each of the above questions. Neither the writer nor the reader should be surprised, but concerned, that there were negative responses from 10 year old children. There was one statistic the writer did not expect, which he believes is very revealing, and some what shocking. Forty-three out of 69 boys and girls reported they would rather spend time with adults than with TV. Upon reflection, that statistic restated reveals that 26 of 69 boys and girls would rather watch TV than spend time with adults. This was one unexpected, foreboding revelation which, the writer believes, warrants future investigation. One wonders if the "adults" the children were referring to were their parents.

In this study it was the writer's contention that so many single and dual parents are entering the work force, that greatly increasing numbers of children are being left alone, or are placed in before and/or after school child-care centers, and therefore, away from nurturing, caring loved ones.

Hewlett (1994) reported that over the past 3

decades, "children have lost approximately 12 hours of parental time a week "(p. 5). Citing research, Hewlett reported "ominous links between absentee parents and a whole range of emotional and behavior problems" (p. 5). Hewlett referred to a 1989 study which surveyed 5000 eighth grade students in San Diego and Los Angeles and "found that the more hours children took care of themselves after school, the greater the risk of substance abuse" (p. 5).

The writer believes there will be a payday, someday, if this growing problem is not broadly recognized and reversed. Evidence that the problem exists and is growing is affirmed and attested to, by the facts that children are having children, and children are killing children.

Perhaps its time to relieve mothers from total responsibility since there are enough implications to go around. In recent years the writer has found that many fathers do not fully understand, and therefore do not fulfill their responsibilities as fathers. Employers might consider paternity leaves, and the government could extend the Family and Medical Leave Act to include all parents. School authorities should recommend replacement of the agrarian school calendar by extending the school day and year. There are not many children in Chicago needed to tend flocks nor

children in New York City required to harvest crops.

All thinking, caring, responsible, adults, but particularly parents, must recognize and understand the problem as it exists. The number of throw away children continues to grow. Children from both affluent and poor homes spend many hours on their own. Children need and want the attention of adults. They are entitled to no less. Parents then, must exercise all prudent care within the means available to them; provide and maintain the protective and caring environment necessary; or be willing to accept the consequences of their poor judgement.

To repeat, in this study, 26 out of 69 boys and girls, from a middle class suburban community, would rather spend time watching TV than socializing with adults. The quality of the social values being imparted by contemporay television programing is a topic for other studies.

In a much lighter vein, there were many interesting reactions from the students and adults. This writer believes the following comments and notations, from both generations, because they are the fruit of this study, are worthy of quotation at length.

From student logs:

Mrs. Smith said she thought of me while she was on

vacation in Florida. She even brought me a sea shell.

The adults helped me to understand. They are patient.

One student wrote, I really got a lot of hell from the adults. The writer is certain the child meant to write "help."

The question, "Was working with adults interesting? Fun?" brought varied expressions.

Yes, it was awesome!

Yes, I wish they would come everyday.

They were great to have around because sometimes I didn't even know what I was doing.

Yes because they make work fun.

Yes !!!!!!!!

I like working with older people because they have so many new ideas.

Yes, because when I didn't know something he would

give me the answer.

When I was absent for a week she helped me catch up.

Older people know everything.

I liked it because I don't spend a lot of time with grownups.

Old people are kinder.

Yes those were the best times all year.

The adults were not only smart but fun.

I had fun and I think they did too.

They know so much I never knew.

I never thought older people were so much fun.

I think every class in the world should have adult mentors because it would be a better place.

It was fun to talk with adults and to ask them questions.

She held my hand when I had to see the nurse.

I never knew about white alligators until Mrs. Smith showed me her pictures.

I would have never thought that old people could be so much fun!

I wish Mrs. Morgan would come every day.

Mrs. Smith loves children.

She could work with 20 people at the same time.

Working with mentors was not interesting but it was fun.

Yes, definitely, absolutly.

She helped me fly a kite. It was my sister's and I didn't want to hurt it.

I like the idea of adults.

I never knew a lot of older, older people were really

so much fun.

We really need those adults.

I like Mrs. Morgan because she looks like my grandmother. She's dead.

Excerpts from thank you notes written to the mentors by the children at the close of school.

Thank you for coming in. You have been a joy to everyone.

It was neat when you brought in the 1940 newspaper.

The story of your childhood was interesting, especially about the World War II stories and about rationing food, gasoline, and even shoes.

I really liked the cookies you brought to class.

I know my school grades got better because of you.

I'm sorry the year ended but I will look for you in the stores and church.

Thank you for going on our field trips.

It was nice of you to give us the ice cream party.

I liked when you read to us.

You taught us a lot.

School was fun when you came in.

You are fun to be around.

I'm giving you my address, please write to me.

Thank you for showing us your school yearbook.

I liked having you around. You always had the answers.

It was nice of you to come to our picnic.

The balloon car race was fun. You helped me measure the distances.

Here is my phone number. If you call and ask for me, and if they think you have the wrong number, just tell them you are my favorite mentor calling.

Did you know you were written up in the newspaper. Your picture is in it too.

I wish you guys can come back next year.

I wish every class could have mentors.

It made me happy to be with people who cared and who helped me when I didn't know what to do.

There were many interesting notations in the weekly logs written by the mentors.

Sometimes I have to push myself to come to class but when I do, I always enjoy being with the children.

I enjoy every visit and I learn something new each time.

I look forward to these visits each week.

I had forgotten how much fun it is to fly a kite.

After each visit I feel more comfortable because the children are so open and friendly.

I'm pleased to see how well children work together in groups. We never did that.

I was pleased to see how hard the children work in physical education class.

Computers in every classroom. Wow!

The students seem to enjoy everything they do. I don't remember school being such fun.

I always get such a high from these kids.

The children seem so happy because I'm here.

Certainly not like the religious school I attended. Each child has such a variety of learning experiences and they have so much fun and freedom to do it.

These children enjoy working with adults. Indeed, they are teaching me.

In science I love the way the teacher encourages the children to try again and again when they fail.

I'm proud to play a little part in this exciting

project.

I helped with an art lesson today. It was interesting to watch the children work out their ideas.

We listened to a visiting teacher from Sweden today. It was a learning experience for each of us.

Today we took a 100 mile bus trip to the state capital. We visited the state museum, the capitol, and the governor's office. it was my first field trip in forty years. The children were wonderful and so was the day.

Today the children surprised me with a birthday party. It was great! Wonderful! It was so thoughtful. Since I'm diabetic I asked the children not to tell my wife that I ate a piece of birthday cake. I believe my smile reached both sides of the classroom.

Boy did I learn lots today in computer class. I was simply amazed at how knowledgeable and skillful these children are with computers. It's wonderful to be able to see, close-up, the modern ways of education.

Today I assisted children as they wrote a poem for

Mother's Day. Later I worked with a group of children while they rehearsed a play. It's always fun. I'm always surprised - they learn so fast and they always seem to have fun and enjoy their schooling.

I enjoyed my visit today, so much. I love the children. They are so outgoing and friendly.

I helped children plant seeds today. In the next days and weeks they will be able to observe something happening.

At the end of the practicum the adults were asked, "Good, bad, or indifferent, what do you want to tell us about this experience?"

A gentleman wrote: I never enjoyed anything as much as I did working with these children. Knowing they seemed to enjoy me as much as I enjoyed them. I am looking forward to doing this next school year. I believe this program should be instituted in every elementary school. I want to see this program go on.

His wife wrote: It was a privilege to be involved with 4th grade children. My family has grown and are raising their families. To be involved with children

has help me to remember when my family was young. My husband and I really looked forward - each week - to be with the children - to work with them, to play and to laugh with them, and to love them. I am truly looking forward to September when I can be with "my kids" once again.

Hopefully, more people (seniors) will become involved with the children in all grades of the school system. Maybe the kids might want to "adopt" grandparents.

Another volunteer wrote: I would like to think the children responded well to me. I enjoyed working with them very much.

The program seems so valuable to me that I keep my eyes open to possible recruits - I've gained two so far.

Thanks for the opportunity to participate!

Still another volunteer wrote: It was a most gratifying experience -- what a pleasure it was to see those beaming young faces.

On the negative side, I think I saw quite a bit of waste. I was used to the times when the student supplied most of the paper except for tests or "special assignments." I saw quite a few students start writing,

make a mistake, take another sheet of paper and start again and sometimes this was done 2 or 3 times. That doesn't add up to much in one classroom, but when multiplied by the number of classrooms and then the number of schools, it's a bit of a loss. Paper is probably a small item but I feel that this waste goes on to cover many more expensive items.

On the positive side, it was so good to see the easy, friendly interaction between teacher and pupils.

One adult wrote: At first, I was very nervous about coming to take part in helping in the school. It has been so long since I was in school and so much has changed. I like all the changes and think the children are more relaxed in their grades. They all wanted to learn and were very alert. I especially enjoyed working with them on the computer. Actually, they were teaching me. The day we went flying kites was most enjoyable. My family couldn't believe I was out flying a kite. The trip to the State House, though noisy, was fun and interesting. I feel I got more out of this than the children and would certainly like coming back again. Love to all the children.

Finally: It got my brain working again. It also gave me something to look forward to.

The teacher always made me feel welcome and included me in what they were doing.

You really get attached to the kids. They seemed like they really don't want you to go.

I am looking forward to doing it next year, if you will have me.

Your 4th Grade Granny

Recommendations

After concluding this study it was clearly evident to the writer that bringing the generations together in the classroom/school setting can be mutually enjoyable, profitable, and doable. Perhaps it can be said that by the absence of the "parent generation," there was less competitiveness and a higher degree of patience. Therefore, if the parents must be absent from the children, senior citizens can effectively stand in and be both a comfort and an inspiration to the children. After a short period of getting acquainted the generations fused as naturally as day and night. Excitement could be felt as each of the mentors arrived in class. A different atmosphere existed when they left each day. There was a sadness on the last day, evident in both generations.

The writer would urge school administrators to

look closely at intergenerational mentoring, at each grade level. People need people. Perhaps the first and third generations need one another now more than ever. The writer believes both generations found, what we all need, a relationship.

The writer would make several suggestions to teachers and administrators who plan to implement intergenerational mentoring in the classroom.

1. Find volunteers, aged 55 and over, by sending home requests with the children, through local senior citizens organizations, churches, retirement homes, or by advertising in selective local publications.

2. Ask relatives of students to serve in classrooms other than the child's.

3. Orient the parents, faculty, and staff before beginning the program.

4. Only volunteer teachers and principals should be included.

5. Do not ask mentors to do menial school tasks, but rather, treat them as very special guests.

6. Invite the mentors to school functions such as holiday parties, programs, picnics, field trips, plays, exhibits, hobby days, etc.

7. Hold occassional short meetings with mentors after school to inform them and to seek their imput. Refreshments are nice.

8. Be sure mentors are involved in useful ways which highlight their particular talents.

9. Begin the program in informal ways such as games, singing, art work, field trips, group activities, or tours of the building. Allow the children, and the adults, opportunities to get to know one another in friendly, helpful ways.

10. Encourage mentors to "teach the class" about their hobbies, travels, crafts, employment, military serivce, etc. It will put the person in front of the class and they will soon feel comfortable by doing what they know best. Children will get to know them better.

11. Be aware that inclement weather such as ice, snow, very cold or hot temperatures, family emergencies, transportation, or personal health may cause interruptions in plans and schedules. Be understanding.

12. Praise the adults frequently but be careful not to patronize.

13. Plan ways to show appreciation. Perhaps a party, certificate of appreciation (see Appendix I), pictues or articles in local newspapers, recognition by the board of education, a visit by the school superintendent, a reception by the faculty, or invitations to school sports events, such as season tickets, might be acceptable ways to show appreciation.

Often the best and most appreciated, might be nicely written thank you notes from the students.

Dissemination

The writer will urge school personnel to investigate the benefits of intergenerational mentoring at all grade levels. He will assist in any way he might be asked. The writer will place copies of this practicum in his school district curriculum offfice, a 10,000 student district. A copy of the practicum will be submitted to the library of a local state college. The writer will make himself available to present his findings at district in-service meetings. Portions of this study will be prepared for submission to professional publications.

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Appendix A

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Student Questionnaire

Do not write your name.

1. Do you have a parent who does not work outside of your home?

Yes _____ No _____

2. Do you have an adult at home when you leave for school and when you return from school?

Yes _____ No _____

3. Do you go to a place other than your home either before or after school?

Yes _____ No _____

4. If you do not go home after school, please check below.

a. the home of a neighbor or relative _____

b. a day care center, such as Just Kids, Rocking Horse _____

c. other _____

Appendix B

FOURTH GRADE TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Fourth Grade Teachers - Questionnaire

1. Do you have students who have difficulty completing homework assignments?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you have students who have difficulty completing class assignments?

_____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you have students who regularly exhibit frustration in class?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Do you have students with attention deficit?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Do you have students whom you feel are having difficulty with personal, social, emotional, or family problems,

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Do you have students whom you feel could benefit from one on one attention in the classroom?

_____ Yes _____ No

Appendix C

DAILY FREE TIME OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

Questionnaire

Daily free-time activities of 4th grade students.

Do not write your name.

Please try to be accurate as you record your time for each day, Monday through Sunday. Thank you.

Time spent watching television.

Monday Total time _____

Tuesday Total time _____

Wednesday Total time _____

Thursday Total time _____

Friday Total time _____

Saturday Total time _____

Sunday Total time _____

1. About how much time - Monday through Sunday - might you spend playing by yourself or with other children?

Total time _____

2. About how much time - Monday through Sunday - might you spend on a computer at home?

Total time _____

3. About how much time - Monday through Sunday - might you spend reading at home?

Total time _____

4. About how much time - Monday through Sunday - might you spend just talking with your Mom - Dad - or other adults outside of school?

Total time _____

Appendix D

PRE PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR STUDENTS

Pre-Practicum Questionnaire for Students

1. Do you spend much of your time with adults?

   _____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you spend enough time with your parents?

   _____ Yes _____ No

3. Are adults fun, exciting people to be with?

   _____ Yes _____ No

4. Would you like to spend more time with adults?

   _____ Yes _____ No

5. If adults were to come into the classroom would that be

   _____ dull _____ O. K. _____ exciting

6. If adults were to come into the classroom to work with you on your school work that would be

   _____ dull _____ O. K. _____ exciting

7. Do you believe older adults are "with it" or pretty much out of touch with the times?

   _____ with it _____ out of it

Appendix E

STUDENT FORM FOR WRITTEN/ORAL REPORT

Student Outline for written/oral report comparing/contrasting childhood/schooling of self and mentor.

I. Family life

A. Mentor and self

1. Family members living at home
2. Household chores
3. Family meal times
4. Family togetherness (talking, reading, holidays, parties, playing)
5. Family vacations
6. Religious functions
7. Extended family members (interactions)
8. Telephone, automobile
9. Play time

II. Schooling

1. Curriculum
2. Materials/equipment (movies, chalkboard, etc.)
3. Ancillary personnel (art, music, P. E., library, nurse, secretary, aides, custodian, counselor)
4. Principal
5. Teachers
6. Lunch time

7. Playground
8. Homework
9. P T A
10. Schoolmates
11. Boy-girl activities, friendships
12. Holiday celebrations
13. Fire drills

III. The advantages of childhood.
   A. Mentor's childhood
   B. My childhood

IV. The disadvantages of childhood.
   A. Mentor's childhood
   B. My childhood

V. Advantages of Schooling
   A. Mentor's schooling
   B. My schooling

VI. The disadvantages of schooling
   A. Mentor's schooling
   B. My schooling

VII. Conclusions

Appendix F

PRE PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR ADULTS

Pre-Practicum Questionnaire for Adults

1. Can you name anything exciting that is happening in today's elementary schools?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you have any negative feelings about today's elementary schools?

_____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you beleive our elementary schools are successfully meeting the needs of today's elementary students?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Do you believe you can make a positive difference for students in our schools?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Have you been invited to attend any school functions since your children left school?

_____ Yes _____ No

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Appendix G

POST PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR ADULTS

Post-Practicum Questionnaire for Adults

1. Can you name anything exciting that is happening in today's elementary schools?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you have any negative feelings about today's elementary schools?

_____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you believe our elementary schools are successfully meeting the needs of today's elementary students?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Did you enjoy the opportunity to work in our school?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Do you believe you were able to make a positive difference while working in our school?

_____ Don't know _____ Yes _____ No

6. Would you like to be invited to attend school functions like - holiday plays, concerts, picnics, field trips, children's programs, etc.?

_____ Yes _____ No

Appendix H

POST PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR STUDENTS

Post-practicum Questionnaire for Students

1. Did you enjoy working with adults?

_____ Yes _____ No

2. Do you feel the adults helped you with your school work?

_____ Yes _____ No

3. Are adults fun, exciting people to be with?

_____ Yes _____ No

4. Would you like to spend more time with adults?

_____ Yes _____ No

5. Do you believe older adults like children?

_____ Yes _____ No

6. Do you think it would be good to be an adult?

_____ Yes _____ No

7. Would you rather spend time with adults or watch T. V.?

_____ Adults _____ TV

Appendix I

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

••• *WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS* •••

Bells Elementary School

THIS CERTIFICATE IS PRESENTED TO

Alice Haines

In recognition of your classroom visitations in which you presented oral history, encouraged student learning, and shared your love of children. Your visits and presentations to our students added that personal touch not found in textbooks.

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Robert W. Kern, Superintendent

Howard S. Hausmann, Ed.D. Candidate

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Classroom Teacher

June, 1994

Terry C. Van Zoeren, Principal

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